

1899

# Medical Officer's Annual Report.

Lifford House,  
Dartford.  
February 4th, 1899.

To the  
Chairman and Members of the Dartford Urban District Council.—  
Gentlemen,

I have the honour of presenting my report as Medical Officer of Health for the year 1898.

Population. I estimate the total population at 14,093.

Births Registered. There have been 456 births registered during the past year, being an increase of 21 on 1897. Of these 239 were males and 217 females.

Births in Union House. There were 19 births in the Union House and 9 of these belonged to Dartford.

Birth Rate. The gross birth rate would therefore be 32·35, and the corrected birth rate 33·34.

Births per Quarter. In the following table I give the distribution of births per quarter.

	March Quarter.	June Quarter.	September Quarter.	December Quarter.	Total.
Males	67	49	46	77	239
Females	58	58	43	58	217
	<u>125</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>135</u>	<u>456</u>

Deaths Registered. The entire number of deaths registered was 278 being a decrease of 24 on last year, which was an increase of 30 on 1896.

The decrease is made up as follows:—

Dartford Parish	9
Union House	14
St. Vincents Industrial School	1
Metropolitan Asylums Board's Ships	12
Total	<u>36</u>

but there is an increase in the Cottage Hospital of 5, in the Isolation Hospital of 6, and in the London County Asylum of 1. Total 12.

Death Rate. This gives a gross death rate of 19·71.

By deducting 79 persons who were non-residents but whose deaths were registered in the Dartford district, we get a death rate of 14·13.

This 14·13 therefore is the true death rate of the parish of Dartford.

Average Birth and Death Rates for past seven years. The average birth rate for the past seven years amounts to 32·72 per 1,000, and the death rate for the same period is 15·82

From the following table which gives the birth and death rates per 1,000 for the past seven years, it will be seen that last year we are considerably below the average.



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The total number of deaths registered was 278. 153 males and 125 females and by the last table we find that 79 were non-residents therefore the remaining 199 constitute the real mortality of the town.

Deaths per Quarter.

The following table gives the distribution of deaths per quarter.—

Quarter Ending:	31st March.	30th June.	30th September.	31st December.	Total
Dartford	46	27	52	38	163.
Public Institutions	19	34	30	32	115
Total	65	61	82	70	278

The large increase in the number of deaths in the 3rd Quarter is due to a severe epidemic of Diarrhœa among children, 16 deaths being registered from that disease. This I consider arose from the extremely hot weather during the months of August and September.

Deaths of Children.

73 deaths of children under one year as against 72 in 1897 have been registered.

The following table gives the infant mortality since 1891.

1891	60.	1895	85.
1892	79.	1896	71.
1893	84.	1897	72.
1894	66.	1898	73.

The average Infant Mortality for the past eight years is 73·75

Deaths from Tuberculosis.

28 deaths were registered as due to Tuberculosis, including 16 from Phthisis. As this is a disease which is due in a large measure to children sleeping in close and badly ventilated rooms and over-crowding and is also caused by using for food the milk and flesh of animals affected by it, it might to a considerable extent be prevented by attention to the proper ventilation of bed-rooms. by boiling all milk directly it is received into the house and by the thorough cooking of all meat.

Deaths from Malignant Disease,

16 deaths occurred from Malignant Disease.

Inquests.

The Coroner sat on 16 inquests, and three deaths were registered where there was no medical attendant.

Infectious Diseases Notified.

Under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act 318 cases of Infectious Disease were notified. The following table gives their distribution with the totals for 1896 and 1897 for comparison.—

Diseases:	Dartford	Union House	Total for 1898	Total for 1897	Total for 1896
Small Pox	—	—	—	—	2
Diphtheria	41	1	42	27	72
Membranous Croup	1	—	1	2	—
Scarlet Fever	22	—	22	19	30
Measles	199	7	206	118	223
Typhoid Fever	8	2	10	11	24
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—	2	3
Erysipelas	29	—	37	36	44
Total	300	18	318	215	398

Small-pox.

I am again happy to be able to report that no case of Small Pox was notified from your district during the past year. I cannot help drawing

Vaccination.

attention to the ill considered Vaccination Act which has come into operation during the past year and it is with a feeling of very great alarm that I look forward to the effect it will have on this district, since



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having in our vicinity a large Small Pox Hospital we are the more exposed to the ravages of this frightful disease. Our only hope is in the care with which our magistrates may use their discretionary powers

Diphtheria.

43 cases were notified including 1 of Membranous Croup. This shows an increase of 16 on the previous year, but a decrease of 29 on 1896.

I am sorry to have to report this increase, as by the care taken in isolation and thorough disinfection of the various cases, also by the frequent disinfecting of dustbins and the attention given to the sewers, I was hoping for a considerable decrease in the disease.—

25 cases were removed for isolation.

In only three cases did it spread to a second member of the same family and in 4 instances it re-appeared in houses from which it had been reported several months previously, in none of these latter cases after the closest examination could I find any sufficient cause for the disease. In two instances it occurred in new houses, where the sanitation appeared perfect but the walls had not had quite sufficient time to dry

In 15 cases the houses were damp and had the areas close and with bad ventilation. in 7 I found defects in the sanitary arrangements. The following table gives the street list according to altitude, the higher ground contains about twice the population of the lower, and I notice that Mount Pleasant Road from which 7 cases were reported last year is altogether free.—

HIGHER GROUND.		LOWER GROUND.	
Brent	1.	Manor Place	1.
Fulwich Lane	1.	Lowfield street	4.
Great Queen Street	2.	East Hill (lower part)	1.
Colney Road	2.	High Street	2.
St. Martin's Road	2.	Spital Street	1.
Fulwich Road	2.	Overy Street	1.
East Hill (higher part)	1.	Home Gardens	2.
Darenth Road	1.	Suffolk Road	1.
Lavinia Road	1.	Hythe Street	6.
Gladstone Road	2.	Orchard Street	1.
Dartford Road	1.	Kent Road	1.
Tower Road	1.		
Miskin Road	1.	Total	21
West Hill	1.		
Union House	1.		
Highfield Road	2.		
Total	22		

I should like to point out that many of the cases reported to me were little more than sore throats and cannot be classed as true diphtheria; yet, I consider that it is a wise thing on the part of medical men to notify even doubtful cases, as I believe that to some extent the spread of the disease is due to mild cases which are not even presented for medical treatment.

Scarlet Fever.

22 cases of Scarlet Fever were reported during the year, being an increase of 2 on 1897. There were no deaths. 13 cases were removed for isolation. It is satisfactory to be able to report that the town has





been saved from what at one time threatened to be an epidemic of this disease. 8 cases occurred nearly about the same time among children attending the St. Alban's Board Schools or in contact with them. This seemed to point to some child suffering from this illness and attending these schools. However, by having many of these cases removed as early as possible for isolation, and extreme care taken in the homes of those that remained the disease did not spread. One case was traced to a sister in London suffering from the disease and writing home; one was in intimate relation with the Darenth Hospital. In two instances did it spread in the same family and in two cases the disease was very doubtful. In six I was unable to trace the source of infection.

**Typhoid Fever.**

10 cases were notified as against 11 during last year which was a reduction of 13 on 1896.

Two deaths were registered and three were removed for isolation. Two cases reported from the Union House were received from other parishes in the Dartford Union. Two of the cases notified were doubtful. In two the w.c's. were very defective and near one of these was a badly kept cowshed and manure heap which was reported, on several occasions to your committee. In one case the house drain was broken and the ground saturated with sewage. One seemed to be due to the eating of oysters and in two I could not trace the origin of the disease.

**Measles.**

There were 206 cases notified during the year. This is a considerable increase on 1897 but not quite so bad as 1896, the numbers standing respectively at 118 and 223. These cases with a few exceptions were of an exceedingly mild type, only one death being reported.

The epidemic in the latter part of 1897 ran on into 1898 and persisted more or less till August. Toward the end of November it again made its appearance, attacking in a severe form one of the Infant Schools in the town, which had to be closed in consequence. Owing to the extreme mildness of the disease little care was taken by some parents to isolate the cases, indeed in several instances scholars from infected houses were sent to school as usual and this in a large measure caused the continued presence of the disease during the greater part of the year.

The following table gives the number of diseases notified each month during the year.

Month	Diphtheria	Scarlet Fever	Enteric Fever	Erysipelas	Measles	Total.
January	1	—	—	5	15	21
February	2	1	—	1	9	13
March	3	2	—	6	18	29
April	4	4	—	2	17	27
May	4	4	2	4	4	18
June	2	2	2	4	13	23
July	—	1	1	3	11	16
August	2	2	—	1	5	10
September	2	3	2	—	1	8
October	8	1	1	4	—	14
November	4	1	—	2	17	24
December	11	1	2	5	96	115
Total	43	22	10	37	206	318





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### Summer Diarrhoea.

The town was again visited with a severe epidemic of infantile Diarrhoea, 17 deaths being registered. The first death occurred in the last week of August. It continued in a virulent form for about three weeks till about the 20th of September, when it rapidly declined on the advance of the colder weather.

### Dairies and Cowsheds.

With Mr. Harston, the Sanitary Inspector, I visited all the dairies and cowsheds in the town and with the exceptions already reported to your committee I found them in a thoroughly sanitary condition.

### Slaughter- houses.

All the Slaughter-houses also were, as already reported, in a fairly satisfactory state. I am looking forward to the time when a public abattoir may be established in the district which will afford increased facilities for supervision.

### Cranpit

I am glad to be able to report progress in regard to the Cranpit which has been a source of danger for several years back and to which one case of diphtheria during the past year has been traced. At length my suggestion that it be covered in the whole distance open north of the Fairfield is likely to be carried out during the coming year. This will be a great advantage from a sanitary point of view to the houses on the east side of Lowfield Street.

### Water Supply

The monthly reports containing the bacteriological and chemical analysis of the Metropolitan Water Supply have been regularly followed. In this way I have been able to form a fair opinion on the quality of water supplied to Dartford.

### Gipsy Vans and Tents.

I have again on several occasions had my attention called to Gipsy Vans and Tents on the Brent and Fairfield. These I reported on and the nuisance was abated for the time, but only to return. I should be glad to have a permanent stop put to this state of things. There being neither water supply nor sanitary convenience the places soon get littered with filth which is likely to contaminate the whole district and become a serious danger to the health of the town.

### Overcrowding

Over-crowding still exists although perhaps not quite to the same extent as in the previous year, many new houses having been erected in the meantime. The several cases brought to my notice were reported on and the state of things remedied.

The various cases notified to me as dangerous to the health of the town being reported on have been attended to. I have also advised the necessity of supplying water to all water-closets in the district. This is at present receiving the attention of your committee.

### Inspector of Nuisances Report.

The following is a short extract from the Sanitary Inspector's report for the year.

"Notices have been served for the abatement of nuisances in 367 houses. One house has been pulled down after being condemned as unfit for human habitation and another closed, and another made fit. 152 houses have been connected to the main sewer together with the drainage of several large institutions."

I remain, Gentlemen,

Yours truly,

J. HAMILTON.



TABLE OF DEATHS during the year 1898, in the Dartford Urban District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES.							MORTALITY FROM SURJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATH OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.																	
	At all ages	Under 1 year.	Under 5		15 and under		25 and under		65 and up-wards	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Phtisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease	Influenza.	Injuries.	All Other Diseases.	Total.	
			5	15	25	65																			
Dartford Parish	163	66	25	1	10	34	27	Under 5 upwds.	—	5	1	—	—	1	—	2	16	1	11	16	1	—	54	91	
Union House	80	6	3	2	2	30	37	Under 5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	1	4	—	5	9	
Infectious Diseases Hospital	26	1	12	9	3	1	—	Under 5 upwds.	—	10	1	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13	
Cottage Hospital	8	—	—	—	1	6	1	Under 5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	4	8	
London County Asylum	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	Under 5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	
TOTALS	278	73	40	12	16	71	66	Under 5 upwds.	—	15	2	1	6	—	1	2	16	1	13	1	—	5	2	59	113
										10	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	15	14	24	5	2	88	165	

The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality.

Deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto.	79	6	10	8	5	14	36	5 upwds.	Under 5 upwds.	—	8	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	4	16
										—	6	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	3	5	7	2	2	36	63



Area and Population of the District or Division to which this Return relates.

Area in Acres 4,251.332.

Population (Last Census) 11,906.

” (Estimated to middle of 1898) 14,093.

Death Rates.

{ General 19.71.  
 Corrected 14.13.

{ per 1,000 Population, esti-  
 mated to middle of 1898.

{ Infant (under one  
 year of age) 160.08

{ per 1,000 Births Registered

TABLE OF POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND OF NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1898, in the Dartford Urban Sanitary District; classified according to Diseases, Ages and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; Public Institutions being shown as separate localities.	Population of all Ages.		Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	New cases of Sickness in each Locality, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health.						Number of such cases removed from their homes in the severe Localities for treatment in Isolation Hospital.			
	Last Census.	Estimated to middle of 1898.			Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.
Dartford Parish ...	11368	13375	437	Under 5. 5 upwds.	22	41	1	8	29	198	13	24	1	1
Union House ...	328	423	19	Under 5. 5 upwds.	—	1	—	2	8	7	—	1	—	2
Cottage Hospital ...	—	15	—	Under 5. 5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
St. Vincent's Schools	210	210	—	Under 5. 5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
M.A.B. Ships ...	—	70	—	Under 5. 5 upwds.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	11906	14093	456	Under 5. 5 upwds.	22	42	1	10	37	206	13	25	1	3

J. HAMILTON,  
Medical Officer of Health.



